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ABSTRACT

In 1988, Lakeland Community College (LCC), in Mentor, Ohio, began a strategic planning process to refocus the college on its mission, identify priorities for the years ahead, and establish a process to achieve them. Five strategic priorities were identified: (1) sustain and strengthen academic quality for students by adding at least 25 full-time faculty members, upgrading the library, ensuring student access to current computer technology, incorporating up-to-date technologies into the learning process, maximizing transfer opportunities, expanding local public higher education opportunities, keeping laboratory equipment current and in good repair, and improving student tracking systems; (2) keep career training up-to-date by responding to the needs of area businesses, developing new programs, creating customized training programs, developing internships, keeping instructional equipment current, and providing specialized counseling and retraining programs for adults; (3) maintain an open-door policy by stabilizing resident tuition, providing more financial assistance, expanding off-campus services, strengthening recruitment efforts, providing full handicapped access, utilizing low-cost facilities, upgrading LCC's educational television programs, and increasing the range of cultural and intellectual events on campus; (4) protect the taxpayers' investment in LCC's facilities by increasing maintenance and renovation efforts, maximizing cost controls, expanding the library, and repairing the Performing Arts Center; and (5) guarantee stable financial performance through continued internal controls, maintaining sufficient reserves, attracting grants, and restoring the appropriate balance among state, local, and tuition funding. To fulfill these priorities, LCC will seek a 1.5 mill issue in November 1991. (MAB)

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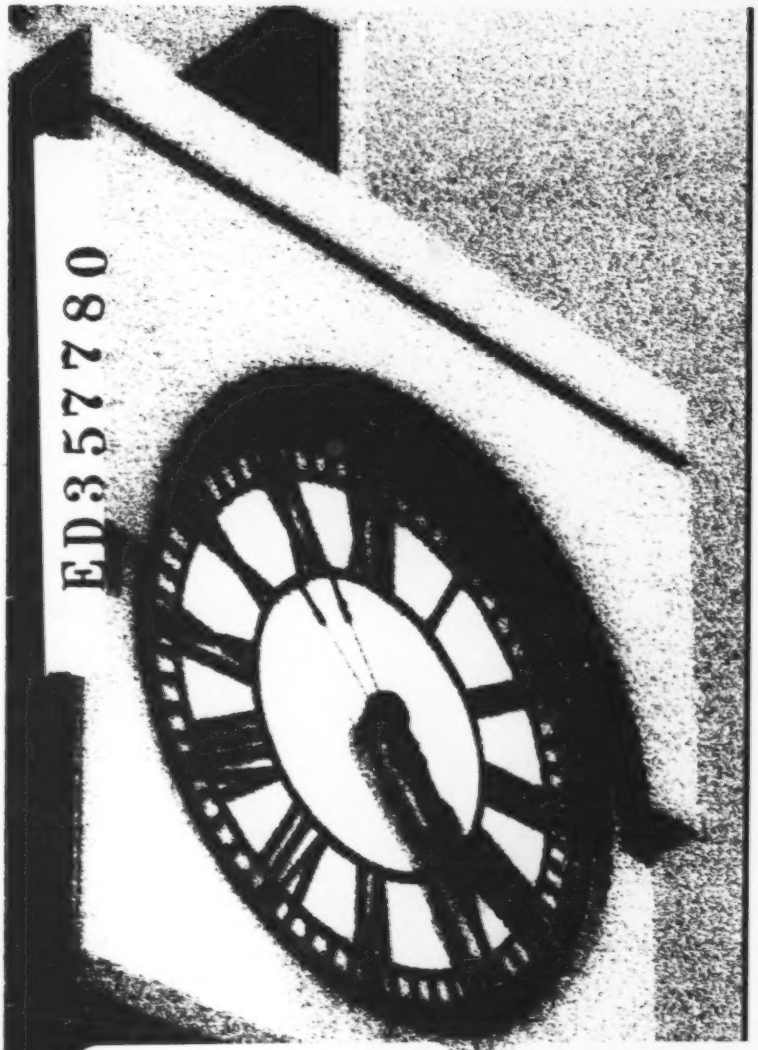

A Blueprint For Excellence

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Lakeland Community College

Lake County's High Quality, Open Access College

Lakeland is the only college in the State of Ohio established by the vote of the people it was created to serve. The 1966 Lake County vote to create Lakeland Community College , and the 1967 vote to provide funding shaped the college and began a legacy of new educational quality and real economic impact. Now a generation-old, Lakeland stands for opportunity.

Lake County residents, communities and organizations reap enormous results from the original investment in open-access, high-quality postsecondary education.

Since 1967:

•More than 95,000 Lake County residents have studied credit and non-credit courses at Lakeland. Over 43% of current Lake County residents say they have taken a course at Lakeland. Another 33% attend campus civic, educational, and cultura events.

• Lakeland has awarded over 10,000 associates degrees, leading to employment and baccalaureat study.

• Lakeland faculty enhanced the curriculum from 235 courses in 13 degree programs in 1967 to over 1,000 courses in 34 programs in 1990—with excellent academic standards..

Lakeland Community College

• Enrollment increased 900%, from 1,000 in 1967 to nearly 9,000 in 1990.

• The skilled people who serve our community have included many Lakeland graduates; police, firefighters, health care professionals and child care workers; teachers, technicians, accountants, and architects; engineers, editors, entrepreneurs, and executives; artists, attorneys, and computer professionals.

• Lakeland graduates have been accepted to pursue bachelor's degrees at more than 40 different four-year colleges.

• The college received its first ten-year accreditation from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, the highest possible accreditation.

• Student passing rates on state certification exams are consistently at or near 100%. For instance, the nursing program is rated among Ohio's finest.

• Thirteen Lakeland programs were awarded "selective excellence" recognition by the Ohio Board of Regents.

• Lakeland has helped create jobs in area businesses by educating employees on state-of-the-art equipment, building prototype training systems, and providing statewide resources for local small businesses.

The voters' wisdom and community's investment have yielded important returns to Lake County in the past generation. The needs of the next decade, preparing the classes of 1992 to 2002, requires us to sustain academic quality, update career training and retraining, and keep the door open. Community support will be the key to achieving these goals.

Community support is the key to long-term success at Lakeland, with its mix of state, student, and local funding. State funding in the 1990's is

projected to be level or in decline. Tuition increases must be at a level that keeps Lakeland affordable in the 1990's.

After 24 years without an increase in local funding, Lakeland now needs strong county-wide support for a reasonable increase in community investment. This investment is essential for Lakeland to sustain academic quality, keep job training programs and equipment up-to-date, make necessary repairs in our 25 year old college facility, and keep tuition affordable for all Lake County families. With sustained community support, Lakeland can meet the challenges ahead at a level of quality that will serve Lake County well.

Planning For Lakeland's Future

Lakeland's mission and philosophy paint a clear picture of its role as Lake County's publicly supported, open-access community college.

(a) Provide the academic quality that will help students achieve in line with their talents and initiative, and enable them to transfer to four-year institutions or gain employment.

(b) Keep programs and services current and responsive to the economic and career development needs of Lake County's residents, workforce, and business community.

(c) Make higher education accessible to the entire community by reducing admissions barriers, and keeping the doors open to all.

(d) Work with other community organizations for the benefit of Lake County residents.

Within this mission, plans are regularly updated and priorities reviewed and affirmed. In 1988, Lakeland Community College began a new planning process. A strategic plan was developed to refocus the college on its mission.

Five Strategic Priorities And Initiatives: 1992-2002

identify priorities for the years ahead, and set out a process to achieve them.

The plan is based on input from faculty, staff, and community leaders. In-depth market research has been employed to create a practical vision of Lakeland's future within its proud tradition.

Priority One:
SUSTAIN AND STRENGTHEN ACADEMIC QUALITY FOR STUDENTS

The teaching and learning process is our service and product. Continuing academic excellence requires a commitment to instructional quality throughout the curriculum. Lakeland will undertake a series of initiatives to fill gaps in programs and service quality, and guarantee strength in the years to come.

(a) **Add at least 25 full-time faculty members in the next five years**, to bring Lakeland in line with Ohio Board of Regents standards, meet the expectations of accrediting bodies, and match our sister community colleges.

(b) **Upgrade the library to provide students and residents with the materials needed to support quality education.** Lakeland does not have enough space for books, equipment or people in its library. Lakeland must improve access to its 73,000 volumes, 400 periodicals and regional data bases. It can provide users with rapid, convenient access to materials, link with other Ohio collections via computer and save dollars by this initiative.

(c) **Ensure student access to current computer technology**, by keeping pace with software and hardware developments in our labs, and providing the hands-on experience students need to prepare for the workplace.

(d) **Incorporate up-to-date technologies into the learning process**, using computer, satellite and other telecommunications technologies, so working students can control the pace of their studies; this enables them to meet the demands of occupation, education, and family.

(e) **Maximize transfer opportunities for students to attend four-year colleges** by establishing a transfer center to enable more Lake County residents to begin at Lakeland. Students can begin at Lakeland with two years of low-cost, high-quality education, and then go on to four-year colleges.

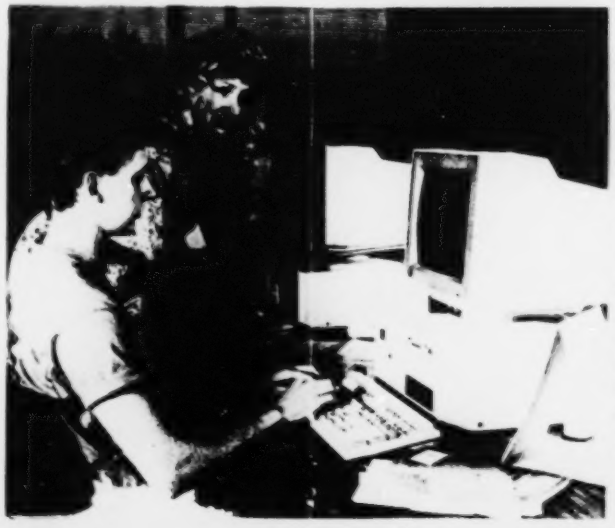
(f) **Expand public higher education opportunities in our County** by offering four-year institutions the ability to hold upper division classes on Lakeland's campus; and work with high schools to provide joint programs that increase the number of area students attending college.

(g) **Keep laboratory equipment current and in good repair**, particularly in the sciences, health, computing and engineering technologies. We cannot train students for tomorrow's careers with yesteryear's equipment.

(h) **Improve student tracking systems** to meet new accreditation standards and ensure that a Lakeland degree has integrity and value. This will also provide students with feedback to improve academic performance, measure retention and future academic attainment, and track career progressions and retraining needs. It is vital for evaluating academic programs and services. Finally, it is needed to meet reporting requirements of the state and federal government; and to continue attracting external funding for student financial aid and educational programs.

Priority Two:
KEEP CAREER TRAINING UP-TO-DATE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Employees from 80% of Lake County businesses surveyed attend Lakeland to improve or update skills. Many of their employers pay a portion of tuition costs. Today more than ever, global economic projections link our County's competitiveness to new technologies, most particularly in manufacturing, health care and biotechnology, information and communication, and factory and office automation. Every economic and employment measurement tells us that Lake County's workforce needs more education and training.



Thus, Lakeland must continue to play a key role in training and retraining of Lake County residents. The College will:

(a) **Respond to the needs of area businesses by continuing our outstanding programs in health careers, engineering technologies, public service, business and office/information management.**

(b) **Develop new programs** in expanding career fields. At this time, for instance, we are studying growing occupations such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, human service technology, international business, desktop publishing, and instrumentation and process control. We continually survey job creation trends to anticipate or respond to training needs in support of the area's workforce.

(c) **Create customized training programs through the Center for Business and Industry** to meet the need for short-term, skill-specific training for people employed by Lake County companies, and business organizations considering moving to Lake County.

(d) **Develop internship/ cooperative education opportunities programs** to provide more students with real world experiences in addition to classroom and lab work.

(e) **Keep instructional equipment up-to-date**, which is particularly important in engineering, health, and business because employers tell us that industry standard equipment is essential for training today's employees.

(f) **Provide specialized counseling and retraining program options to adults in career transition** including people who are beginning new careers as a result of layoffs or changing family circumstances.

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Priority Three:
KEEP THE DOOR TO LAKELAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE OPEN TO EVERY COUNTY RESIDENT

Community colleges were formed for everyone. No student should be turned away because he or she can't afford the tuition, books or child care needed to attend classes. As an essential part of its mission, Lakeland will strive to reduce barriers to college and improve access to education for everyone. Lakeland will:

(a) **Stabilize Lake County resident tuition.** Tuition and fees have tripled since 1979. Increases must be more modest in the future if open access is to be preserved. While Lakeland's tuition remains low compared to private schools, each increase means more students cannot afford the education they need.

(b) **Provide more financial assistance to deserving students**, such as working family members and part-timers seeking career advancement who fall into the gaps of federal and state programs.

(c) **Expand services at off-campus locations** to increase convenience and service for far eastern and western Lake County residents seeking to improve their career status or gain college credits.

(d) **Strengthen efforts to recruit and educate young people and adults** who would benefit from Lakeland services, but may not be aware that college is available and affordable. Special efforts will be made to identify and assist individuals for whom Lakeland is the only opportunity for a college education.

(e) **Provide full handicapped access to all buildings and services** by improving handrails, doors and ramps, laboratories, walkways, and access between buildings.

(f) **Continue low-cost office space, meetings, and special events for important non-profits** who have no where else to turn. In 1990-91, over 100 community groups rented Lakeland facilities.

(g) **Upgrade the Lakeland Cable Network and WTLS** to produce a greater number of quality educational television and instructional materials, and offer hands on experience to communications students.

(h) **Increase the range of cultural and intellectual events brought to campus**, offering students and residents educational opportunities outside the classroom. Lakeland's facilities will remain a vital center for the civic orchestra, chorus, and jazz band, numerous lecture series, the annual jazz festival, art and recreational events, the international film series, the health fair, and cable TV shows sponsored by local organizations.

Priority Four:
PROTECT THE TAXPAYER'S INVESTMENT IN LAKELAND'S FACILITIES

Most of the Lakeland campus is now over 20 years of age and needs a stepped-up program for repair and maintenance. Our facilities were originally planned for a far smaller enrollment. Many, such as the library, are totally overcrowded and inadequate. Others need replacement or renovation as a result of overuse. Protecting the campus is a critical priority, therefore, Lakeland will:

(a) **Increase the rate of the overall maintenance and repair schedule** to prevent buildings from deteriorating further.

(b) **Replace roofs where necessary, and renovate** the heating and cooling system to eliminate unacceptable levels of noise in classrooms and to insure adequate temperature controls.

(c) **Begin a program to maximize energy conservation and cost control**, including the replacement of single pane windows.

(d **Expand the college library** to allow students access to the entire collection, which now cannot house the books required for student programs, much less handle student study demand.

(e) **Repair the Performing Arts Center** which serves all of Lake County. The original seating, wall and floor coverings and acoustical equipment from 15 years ago need replacement.

Priority Five:
GUARANTEE STABLE, ACCOUNTABLE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Lakeland's financial performance has been excellent for a generation. The need for new funding is the result of success, the 900% growth of the college over a generation. To ensure educational excellence in the future, we must also ensure financial stability. To continue its record of fiscal responsibility into the future, Lakeland will:

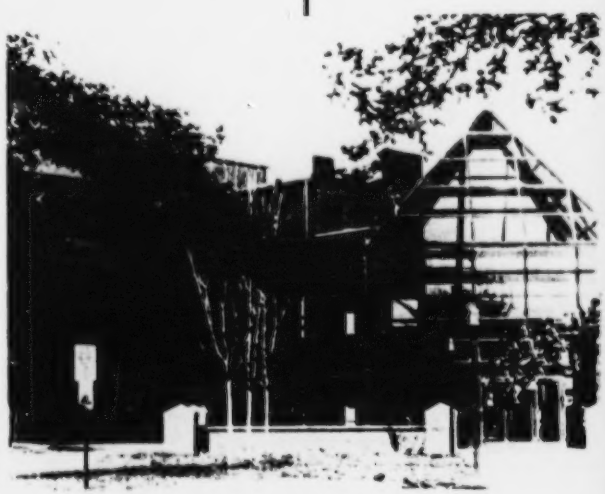
(a) **Continue to control costs and increase performance and productivity** while sustaining quality throughout the College.

(b) **Continue internal controls and financial procedures that have resulted in excellent reports from outside auditors.**

(c) **Maintain sufficient reserves** as required for a college our size, consistent with the historic policy of Lakeland's Trustees.

(d) **Increase physical plant reserves** to the level needed to maintain Lakeland's aging, large, heavily-used physical facility.

(e) **Attract as many private, state, and federal grants, and matching funds** to the college as possible, to fund scholarships and innovation and reduce the burden on local taxpayers.



(f) **Restore the appropriate balance among state, local, and tuition funding**, which has relied too heavily on the state and students in recent years, by increasing local revenues moderately. Unless the local funding base is increased, Lakeland will have too few faculty in key fields, will be unable to maintain innovation or quality; and jeopardize access, facilities and accreditation.

To fulfill the strategic priorities outlined above, to protect current and future students, and to ensure educational quality and the economic vitality of our county, Lakeland will seek a 1.5 mill issue in November of 1991.

This is not a step taken lightly. The need is significant. We have reached the end of the line in getting by with the current faculty, with insufficient maintenance and limited local support.

In today's dollars, the original Lakeland issue is worth only about a third of what it was when it first passed in 1967. At that time, the issue provided half of Lakeland's resources. Currently,

Lakeland Community College: Now And For The Next Generation

however, it covers only 14% of our costs. Its growth lags far behind both the consumer price index and the cost of education.

The need is real. Over the past 24 years we have been fiscally responsible, with per-student costs lower than other comparable colleges. Today, however, resources are stretched to the limit, and state cutbacks are the note of the 1990's. Full-time faculty per student is far below comparable colleges. Full-time faculty are also essential to keep the curriculum up-to-date in any college, that is part of their job. Library facilities lag far behind demand for library services, which increased with the onset of the information age. Tuition and fees have tripled in just a dozen years, far outpacing inflation. Continuing, rapid tuition increases will cut off access to education for thousands of Lake County residents by pricing the college out of their reach. We must meet the need!

To carry out this blueprint for the next ten years, Lakeland needs an infusion of new resources. Essential priorities and initiatives for the future are clear, operations are efficient by any local or national standard, but resources are lacking and not likely to be forthcoming from the state or federal level.

After 24 years without a tax increase, Lakeland must now return to community leaders and the voters for support.

Enrollment has grown ninefold since the original issue passed. Programs have expanded. Buildings face major renovations. We need more full-time faculty. Without more resources, our quality and ultimately our accreditation will be threatened because Lakeland won't have enough faculty or equipment to do the job our county expects.

Lakeland strategically identified what must be done to serve students and families and to protect our existing investment. Lakeland must meet new accreditation standards and maintain its program certifications so students can transfer and gain career opportunities. We need to keep Lakeland strong, because a strong Lakeland keeps workforce competitive, prepares the next generation, and serves the entire community.

Opening Lakeland is one of the best decisions and wisest investments our community ever made. Keeping its quality high, programs and facilities up-to-date, and the door truly open is the decision we face today. Education is vital to our region and nation, and now more than ever, after 24 years with no increase, Lakeland Community College is worth investing in again.

Lakeland Community College: Worth Investing In Again

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